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**SPECTACLE ISLAND OPENING CELEBRATED BY CITY AND STATE OFFICIALS**

*Spectacle Island is open to visitors beginning Saturday June 24th*

Today, the official opening of Boston's Spectacle Island was celebrated by Mayor of Boston Thomas M. Menino, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Chair Matthew Amorello, Executive Office of Transportation Secretary John Cogliano, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Golledge and Boston Parks and Recreation Commissioner Antonia Pollak.

The 87-acre park in the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area, just 10 minutes by ferry from Long Wharf in Boston, will open to the public on Saturday, June 24. The first public ferry to the island will depart from Christopher Columbus Park in the North End at 9:15 a.m. that morning.

The new island park is considered one of the hubs of the Boston Harbor Islands. Ferries will travel six times per day on the weekend and five times each week day from Boston to the island. A free water taxis will provide transportation to 5 other islands. Sunset cruises also travel to Spectacle daily at 7:00 p.m. Passengers will be dropped off on Spectacle Island where they can view the sunset from the north drumlin before being ferried back to Boston.

Mayor Menino who spoke at the opening ceremony said, "Boston residents will enjoy this incredible new open space just minutes from downtown Boston over the summer. Congratulations to everyone who worked to make this vision a reality."

The park was created as part of the Central Artery Tunnel Project (the Big Dig), with over 6.5 million tons of excavated earth transported to Spectacle Island to cap the landfill on the island that was in operation from 1935 to 1959. Transporting this material to Spectacle Island was considered a more affordable solution than drying it out and shipping it elsewhere by truck or rail.

"We're pleased that the agreement signed earlier this year between EOT and DCR was able to get us to the point where we can open Spectacle Island," said Transportation Secretary John Cogliano. "The Romney-Healey Administration has emphasized the importance of this recreational resource, and we are happy to lend our resources to ensure that it can be enjoyed by all who want to take advantage of it."

Spectacle Island Park offers an ADA accessible marina with capacity for 38 vessels, five miles of walking trails (sections of which are ADA accessible), a swimming beach, three shade gazebos, picnic areas, and an ADA accessible visitor center with public restrooms, food concessions, a gift shop and exhibits detailing the history of the island and the massive public works project that created it.

The island is also a fine example of applied sustainable development technology. Photovoltaic panels on the visitor center roof are used to charge the batteries of the vehicles on the island, which are exclusively electric. The visitor center also features composting toilets which mitigate the impact of visitors on water quality in the harbor.

DCR and the City of Boston will share management responsibilities for the island. DCR will provide an island caretaker, and three Rangers to provide events, tours and service for visitors. The City of Boston will provide maintenance for landscaping as well as monitoring and maintenance of the capped landfill.

The Island Alliance, a non profit organization that promotes awareness and use of the National Park, will operate the marina, food concessions and gift shop, as well as organize public events on the island under permit from the DCR and the Boston Parks & Recreation Department.

Island Alliance President Tom Powers said, "Spectacle Island is the latest and most beautiful example of the public benefits of the Boston Harbor clean up. We all look forward to making Spectacle a signature destination for tourist and residents alike."

Construction of Spectacle Island Park began in 1992 with the signing of the original Memorandum of Understanding between the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (predecessor agency to DCR), the City of Boston and MassHighway. The landfill was capped in 1999 and the park itself was completed in 2000. The pier was completed in 2001, the marina in 2002, the visitor center in 2004, and the visitor center exhibits and signage around the island were completed and installed in late 2005 and early 2006.

"Spectacle Island is one of the great accomplishments of the Big Dig," said Massachusetts Turnpike Chairman Matthew J. Amorello. "Working with the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we took a highly polluted, former city dump in Boston Harbor and transformed it into a 121-acre recreational jewel that will be a major attraction within the Boston Harbor Islands National Park for many generations to come."

On June 8, 2006 representatives the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the City of Boston and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) including DCR Commissioner Stephen Burrington, Boston Parks and Recreation Commissioner Antonia Pollak, Boston Public Works Department Commissioner Joseph Casazza, Boston Environment Department Commissioner Bryan Glascock, Boston Chief for Environmental and Energy Services James Hunt III, Executive Office of Transportation Secretary John Cogliano and MassHighway Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky signed Amendment #3 to the original Memorandum of Understand between DCR, MassHighway and the City of Boston for development of Spectacle Island Park.

Final permits for the project were authorized by DEP on June 20, paving the way to open the new park which opens to the public Saturday June 24, 2006.

DCR Commissioner Burrington said, “I am happy to celebrate the completion of Spectacle Island and the Commonwealth is proud to be a co-owner of this public park. The effort put forward by city, state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations has greatly improved the Boston Harbor Islands. Families for years to come will enjoy the beautiful island.”

For more information on the Boston Harbor Islands please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/harbor.htm>.

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